

Professor Kerryn Phelps Announced as the new President of the Australasian Integrative Medical Association Inc.

Professor Kerryn Phelps was confirmed as the new President of the Australasian Integrative Medical Association Inc. (AIMA) for a term of 2 years at the Annual General Meeting in Melbourne last night, Wednesday 9 December 2009.

"I am extremely honoured to be asked to represent my colleagues in this exciting, vibrant, progressive and emerging movement in healthcare. Through Integrative Medicine we will see true health care reform growing out of the "wide angle lens" approach this philosophy offers. I look forward to advancing the healthcare debate in new directions during my term." Phelps said.

Formed in 1992 the AIMA is an independent not for profit organisation supported by its membership and governed by a Board of voluntary doctors and academic leaders in the field of integrative medicine. AIMA supports and promotes the integration of evidence-based complementary medicine and therapies within current mainstream medical practice. AIMA is the peak medical body representing the doctors of integrative medicine.

Integrative medicine is a philosophy of healthcare with a focus on individual patient care and combines the best conventional western medicine and complementary and alternative therapies from many cultures working hand in hand to provide the best possible patient care. Individual patient care is decided based on what is considered to be best for that patient's individual circumstances, for example a patient with back pain might require medical assessment and physiotherapy and/or acupuncture and/or chiropractic care.

More than 80 percent of cancer patients use at least one complementary or alternative treatment as alongside their conventional cancer treatment (not as an alternative to it)[1].
(Grace K. Dy, 2004)

According to a recent survey, one-third of GPs and one-half of pharmacists reported practising integrative medicine/care, which was defined in the survey as 'a holistic approach to health care that integrates conventional medical care with complementary therapies'[2]. (National Prescribing Service Limited, December 2008 (updated April 2009))

Phelps says *"This is a very robust movement in the US and it is really just taking off in Australia and given the number of doctors that are interested in practising medicine in this way, it is set to become the new 'mainstream'."*

Phelps has also written the first textbook on integrative medicine which is due for release mid-2010. The textbook is the first of its kind in Australia and the US and is described as a revolutionary concept. The text book, for practitioners only at this stage, introduces the concept of Integrative Health – combining medical and complementary therapies with lifestyle to achieve positive patient outcomes.

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<http://www.aima.net.au/>

[1] Grace K. Dy, L. B. (2004). Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use by Patients Enrolled onto Phase I Clinical Trials. Journal of Clinical Oncology , 4810-4815 - <http://jco.ascopubs.org/cgi/reprint/22/23/4810>.

[1] National Prescribing Service Limited. (December 2008 (updated April 2009)). Complementary Medicines Information Use and Needs of Health Professionals: General Practitioners and Pharmacists. Sydney: National Prescribing Service Limited – http://www.nps.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/66620/CMs_Report_-_HP_-_Apr_09.pdf.